

Go Red Together: A creative project illustrating the positive effects of clothing in social situations

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

Grace Douglas

Thesis Advisor:

Dr. Diana Saiki

Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

March 2015

Expected Date of Graduation:

May 2015

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Abstract

The purpose of this creative project was to create a dress that instills confidence in women who have been afflicted with and have survived heart disease. The inspiration for the project came from the American Heart Association's organization, Go Red for Women, and its courageous members. The project contents encompass the skills gained during the undergraduate apparel design program including design development as illustrated by: a customer profile, a graphic inspiration board, original illustration, flat line illustrations, original pattern pieces, an original red dress, and costing sheet. The original design was created after speaking with various members and hearing their input on what styles make them feel most confident and what the iconic Go Red for Women red dress should ultimately represent. The project is intended to demonstrate how apparel can positively affect individuals within a social group.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Saiki, for all of her guidance throughout the contents of this project. She has graciously advised me through new and valuable experiences that I have gained not only during this project, but also during the past five years of my undergraduate career in the apparel design program.

I would also like to thank the American Heart Association and all of the courageous members of Go Red for Women who have inspired and supported me throughout this endeavor.

Special thanks to Maggie Black for her support and for taking time to model the final red dress. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement throughout this project.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diana Saiki". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the printed name of the thesis advisor.

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Author's Note

Long before I made the decision to undertake apparel design for my undergraduate career, I had the irrational dream of one day designing a red dress for the American Heart Association's foundation, Go Red for Women. I have always admired the mission of the organization and how it aids women who are experiencing heart disease. Since learning about the organization, I have had the desire to contribute to the cause. At the time I had dabbled with apparel design – namely endless sketches of dresses within the margins of my high school notebooks, but never dreamed of actually pursuing a career in the field.

When finally being forced to make the decision of what career I ultimately wanted to pursue, I knew that I needed a field that would give me the opportunity to make a difference for someone while simultaneously offering a creative outlet in an ever-changing environment. Naturally, a career in design seemed to meet the majority of that description. Never have I desired to be the next top couture designer or Project Runway's latest star designer. Since entering the field, my only purpose behind my designs has been to create clothing that brings out a woman's natural beauty and her self-confidence. Having dealt with body image issues personally, I knew that I wanted to do whatever I could to prevent a new generation of women from experiencing the same emotions. The idea of creating clothing that flatters and increases a woman's self-confidence in her own beauty is the foundation of this project.

All of the steps taken within this project encompass the knowledge I have gained throughout my undergraduate career in apparel design. The skills exhibited throughout the project are all those which I have learned over the past five years including: marketing research, sewing, draping, pattern-making, computer-aided design, and illustration. All of these skills will be used in my future endeavors in the apparel design industry. The contents of the project that

lent to the development of the final garment include: a customer profile, a graphic inspiration board, original illustration, flat line illustrations, the final pattern, a costing sheet, member testimonies, and a letter of support from the American Heart Association.

Aside from using skills that I have gained from my program, this project has also given me the opportunity to gain new skills and experiences. This was the first opportunity I was given to work with a model and have my garment professionally photographed. I was also given the pleasure of contacting and conversing with current members of Go Red for Women in order to better understand the group and its purpose. Perhaps the most valuable experience to me throughout this endeavor was that of contacting the American Heart Association in search of support by means of an endorsement. Asking for an endorsement is a situation that I had not previously experienced and am grateful to have had the opportunity to do so. This is a professional skill that will be transferrable to whatever environment my future may bring me.

The inspiration for this project came from my own personal desire to design clothing that instills confidence in women as well as the more significant inspiration from the number of women who are fighting and have survived various forms of heart disease. Their contribution was so vital that I was set on contacting current members in order to gain their input of the project as well as their opinion of Go Red for Women and its iconic red dress. Every response I received was exceptionally positive and supportive. The women were very receptive to my endeavor and seemed glad to be a part of the project.

These courageous women were my main inspiration for the overall design of the final dress. In my outreach to these women, I asked them to relate design features that make them feel most comfortable and therefore most confident. I then used this information to create a dress that is flattering yet powerful to the wearer and the viewer. The target age range for the final dress is for women between 30 and 40; however, the general idea of the design is that it

could possibly be worn with confidence by women of all ages. It has since been regarded by women of varying ages and has had a very positive response. Various women, who are as young as 20 and as old as 60, have stated that the dress is one that they would wear with pride. Another design feature that was of particular importance was the neckline of the dress. I wanted a design line that would not expose any possible scars caused by heart surgeries. This led me to the idea of a mock sweetheart neckline – in relation to the significance of the heart – with a lace overlay to camouflage any scarring that could inhibit confidence.

My future goal with this project is to pursue the endorsement offered by the American Heart Association. Julie Petr, the corporate events director of the Indianapolis branch of Go Red for Women, has offered to illustrate the association's support by displaying the project and possibly reaching out to a current Go Red for Women member to wear the dress. I hope to see my dress serve its ultimate purpose of being worn by a survivor of heart disease within the near future. My main goal with this project is to give confidence to women who have experienced the life-changing event of surviving heart disease and have made the selfless decision to use that experience to make a positive change in women nationwide.

Customer Profile

Name: Dana Jackson

Age: 36

Occupation: Pediatric Registered Nurse

Annual Income: \$57,000

Education/Institution/Degree: University of Clemson, Bachelor of Science, RN

Residence (Type and Location): Greenville, SC; suburbs

Marital Status: Married

Children/Ages: 1 boy: age 11, 1 girl: age 8

Leisure Activities: Reading, shopping, walking, gardening, baking

Vacation/Travel: Family vacations (Florida/Disneyworld, state parks, Grand Canyon, etc.)
Getaways with husband (Mexico, Georgia, Tennessee, etc.)

Spending Priorities: Children, groceries, house maintenance, clothing, medical expenses

Favorite Designers: Ann Taylor, Ralph Lauren, and Tommy Hilfiger

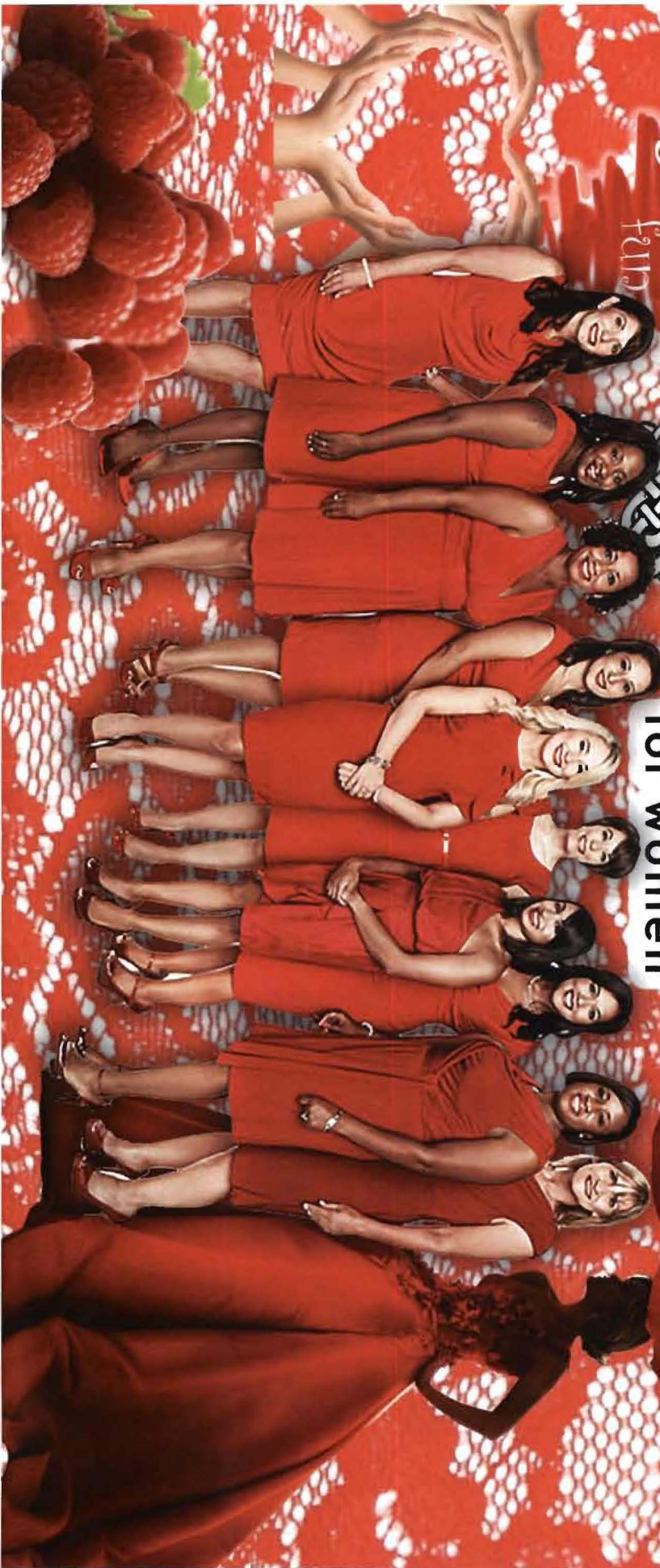
Favorite Stores: Eddie Bauer, Macy's, outlet malls

Women in the targeted market for this design, such as Dana, are a part of generation X (approx. age: 30-45). As a survivor of heart disease, she is dedicated to her health and to maintaining a future with her family. She is practical and realistic, but still wants to feel and appear young and beautiful. She lives a comfortable life with an established income; however, her spending priorities go toward her family and her health rather than her wardrobe. An ideal dress would be one that is flattering and sexy without being too revealing. Many heart disease surviving women such as Dana have had various heart surgeries that may leave scars on their chests. Due to this, it is preferred to have a design that is not extremely low-cut. The dress should be something classic that can be worn for a variety of events to fit her spending habits and realistic lifestyle. A successful design for this target market should camouflage a woman's insecurities and highlight her best features and natural beauty.

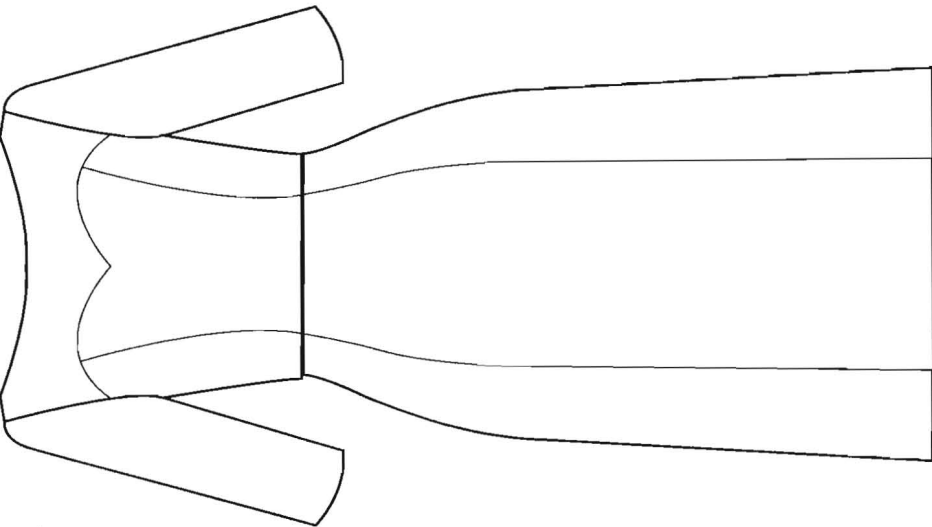
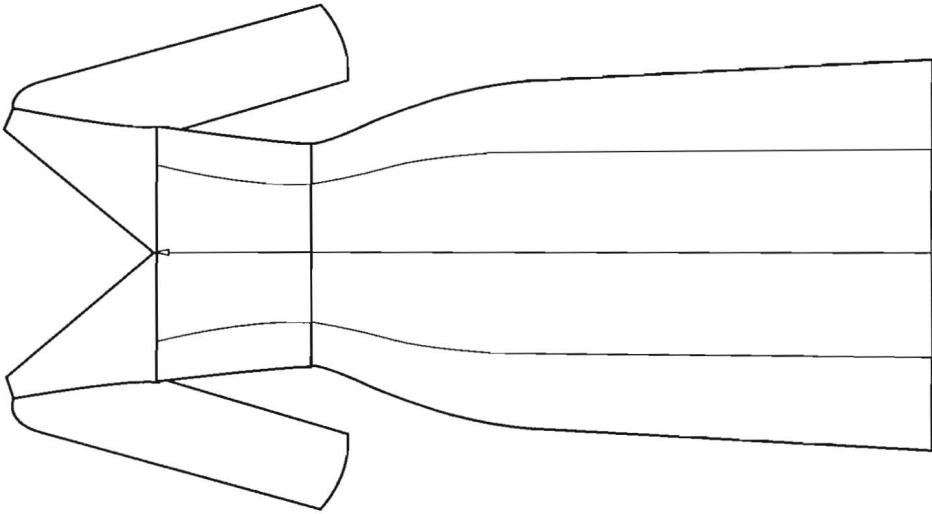
strong *carrying*
brave
vivacious
loving
generous
full

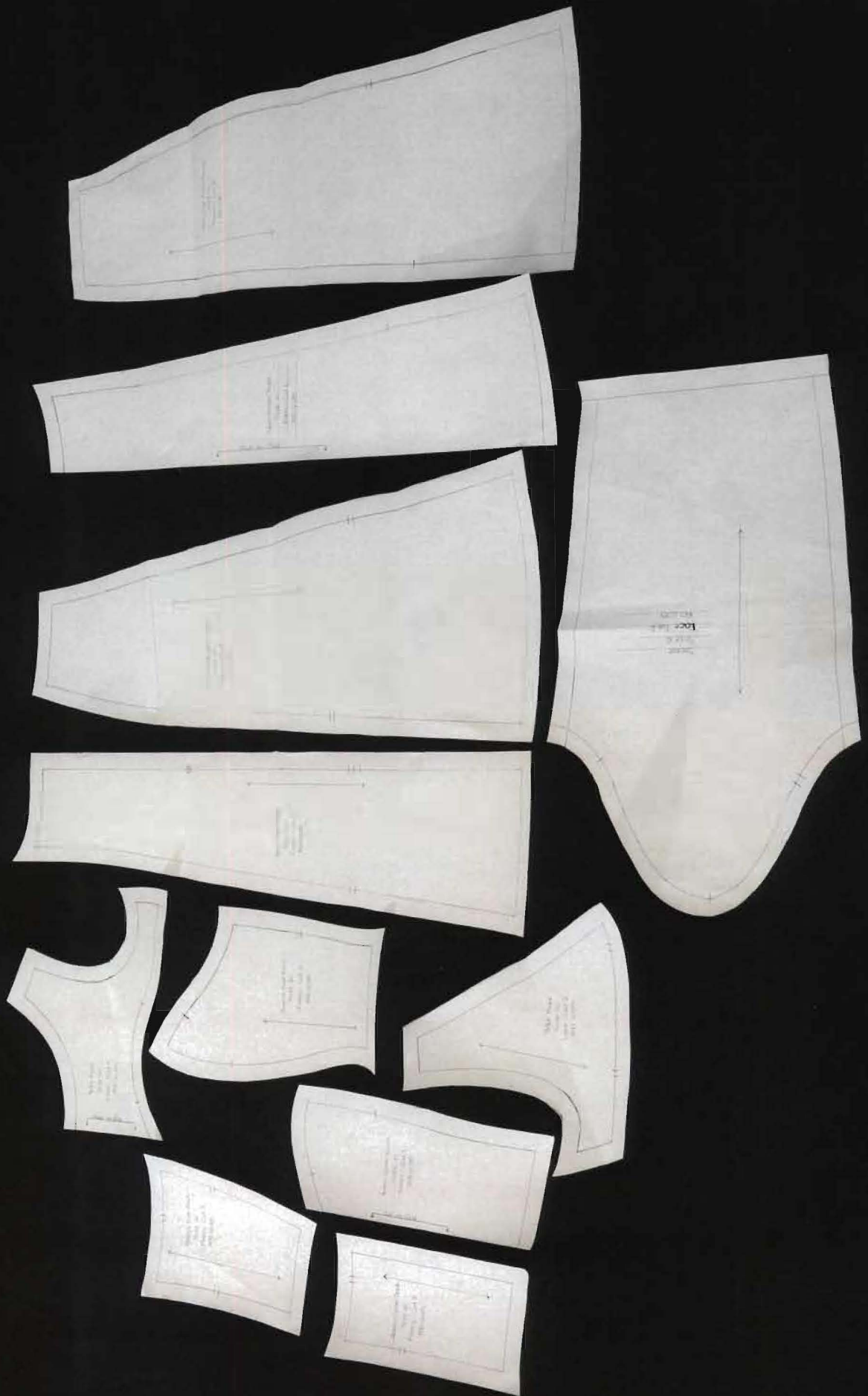


Go Red
for women







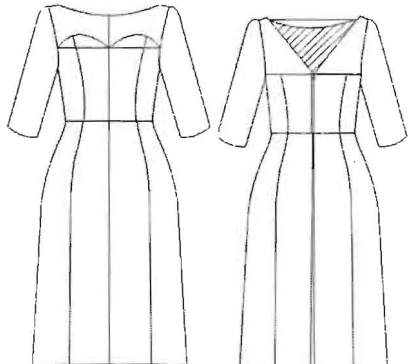







COSTING SHEET

STYLE NO. RD 1035	DATE March 7, 2015
DESCRIPTION: Knee-length princess seam, knit dress with lace yoke and sleeves	
SIZE RANGE: 0-18	COLORS: Geranium Red SEASON: Spring 2016

FABRIC CONTENT	Width	Yardage	Price	Total	Adjusted Total	FLAT SKETCH	
Crepe 100% Polyester	59"	2 yds.	\$12/yd.	\$24.00	\$12.00		
Lace 100% Polyester	59"	1 yd.	\$12/yd.	\$12.00	\$6.00		
TRIM		QUANT	PRICE	TOTAL	ADJUSTED TOTAL		
20-22" invisible zipper		1	\$3.49	\$3.49	\$3.05		
						Front	Back

TOTAL MATERIAL COST	\$21.05
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	PRICE	TOTAL	ADJUSTED TOTAL	<div>SWATCH</div> 
Labor- Machine	\$7.25/hour	\$36.25	\$18.13	
Labor - Cutting	\$1.50/hour	\$2.25	\$2.25	
Miscellaneous		.75		
TOTAL LABOR COST				
\$21.13				
TOTAL STANDARD COST				
\$42.18				
OVERHEAD MARKUP				
GROSS MARGIN (34%)			\$63.91	
RETURNS, FREIGHT, ADVERTISING (5%)			\$67.27	
ALLOWANCE FOR DISCOUNT (8%)			\$73.12	
ACTUAL WHOLESALE SELLING COST			\$73.12	
RETAIL PRICE (62%)			\$192.43	
Price Category:				
Couture, Designer, Young Designer, <u>Bridge</u> Better, Contemporary, Upper Moderate/ Bridge, Moderate, Budget				

Go Red Together: An analysis of the positive effects of clothing in social situations

Go Red for Women's iconic red dress is a prime example of how clothing can act to increase an individual's self-esteem while simultaneously acting as a positive, uniting moderator between people within a social group. Apparel can be examined on various levels such as artistically, physically, socially, emotionally, mentally, individually, etc. These levels relate to the steps taken by individuals as illustrated by Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). The manner in which apparel affects the wearer individually and psychologically can directly affect how they behave in various social situations. The social benefits created by common dress include an increased sense of unity, security, and comfort within the group members. The increased sense of unity, security, and comfort can inversely improve a person's individual esteem and self-actualization.

Retention of individuality is key to the success of a tightly bound group of people. The basic needs of an individual must be met in order for positive interrelations to form. Abraham Maslow's (1943) classic model of the hierarchy of needs illustrates the needs an individual must meet in order to reach his or her fullest potential: physiological, safety, love/sense of belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Many of these needs, particularly belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, can be met with the guidance and support of individuals united under one cause.

Dress is an important and somewhat temperamental factor when individuality and unity collaborate. In general, people have an internal desire to be a part of some sort of group while also expressing themselves as individuals (Lauer & Lauer, 1981). Fashion is a common way to express individuality and may also be used to distinguish a group of people. An individual's will desires a sense of expression; however, that will is open to the pressure created by the desire to find a sense of belonging. To achieve equilibrium between individuality and unity it is important to recall that no one concept of dress is ideal to meet the needs of all women and their characteristics (Gilman, 2002). The red dress

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bridges the gap between dressing to conform to a group while retaining individual personality and expression.

Strict conformity of dress within a group of people could potentially weaken the sense of unity between its members. In many cases, groups will designate an identical uniform to be worn by its members. If an individual does not experience a sense of confidence and esteem when wearing the uniform, then that wearer's sense of belonging is likely to diminish. Gilman (2002) draws attention to the influence of various articles of clothing upon the minds and bodies of women. This influence affects individuals differently. An article of clothing may instill self-confidence in one wearer while causing dissatisfaction and a lowering of esteem in another.

Research illustrates that women tend to gain emotional support or an emotional boost from expression through fashion (Lauer & Lauer, 1981). Women should not be expected to dress identically in order to conform to a group's values and purposes. The group should "dress itself" to meet the needs of its members by accepting their individuality. This will lead to the individuals' desiring to designate themselves as a part of the group by means of individualized conformity.

Go Red illustrates this idea of "individualized conformity" for Women. The red dress is simply a symbol of the organization and its mission "to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke" (American Heart Association, 2015). Instead of designating an identical uniform for all of its members, the organization encourages women to show their support and their involvement by wearing a red dress that suits their personal style and needs. A crowd of women all dressed in red dresses, even though non-matching, makes as great of a statement as a crowd dressed identically from head to toe.

Members of an organization should have the freedom to support the group while wearing clothing that makes them feel confident and also expresses their own personal values. This supports the idea of the "quasi-uniform" or rather people dressed individually but in similar ways. This allows for control of the social as well as the inner self (Craik, 2005). People generally choose an organization

based upon its mission and goals and whether or not those goals match their own personal values.

Gilman (2002) states that the characteristics we practice in environments that we deem safe, such as at home or with family or friends, are ours to use in public environments. Members who join Go Red for Women are likely to have the common goal of encouraging healthier lifestyles and reducing the number of women afflicted by heart disease and stroke.

Go Red for Women exhibits the ideas of a utilizing a “quasi-uniform” as well as using personal goals and values to contribute to the overall mission of the group as mentioned by Craik and Gilman. The red dress is a prime example of the “quasi-uniform” as it is generally a guideline of a uniform rather than a strict uniform in itself. Go Red for Women also encourages the expression of personal values such as strength and confidence by wearing a red dress that meets the individual’s needs. The red dress represents the bond created between women who have experienced similar situations, have similar values, and share the same goal of raising awareness about heart disease. Members of Go Red for Women have either personally experienced heart disease, are supporting loved ones with heart disease, or simply want to provide their support to the group’s mission.

Research has shown that individuals generally wish to identify themselves within a group (Rosencranz, 1972). Through the sharing of personal values and goals, as previously mentioned, group members can relate to one another and unite under a common cause. The purpose of uniting individuals by means of a uniform or a “quasi-uniform” is to identify individuals with common values and to communicate the mission of the group to outsiders. The statement made by matching apparel develops an identity for the group as well as its characteristics (Lauer & Lauer, 1981). This allows the group members to feel a stronger bond while reaching out to people outside of the group to share their personal message and that of the organization.

Organizations commonly use clothing symbolically to create bonds between its members as well as recognition of their missions to the public. Utilizing the medium of fashion as a message is an

effective method for reaching people outside of the group who may not know that group's purpose (Rosencranz, 1972). The Breast Cancer foundation for example, has created a solid association of its mission with the symbol of the pink ribbon. People form associations through symbols whether it is by means of color, design, or logo. Symbolism in fashion can also be used to create and maintain change (Lauer & Lauer, 1981). The mission of Go Red for Women is not initiated by the red dress itself, but rather by the people who wear it. The red dress simply encompasses the meaning behind the actions of its wearers who work jointly to raise awareness about heart disease in women.

The symbolism of the red dress develops a sense of unity between its members. Strong interpersonal relationships are created between individuals with the shared usage of dress and the meaning behind that particular dress (Kaiser, 1990). Current members of Go Red for Women have agreed that the red dress creates a stronger bond between its members. Achord remarked, "I do not think that the Go Red family would be as strongly unified without the symbolic red dress. It is a very strong statement to the world that it is women's cardiovascular disease that is the focus. I think all women love clothes so it is the perfect way to unify women!" Pokornowski, another member, believes "that the mission of AHA and Go Red is what unifies everyone and the red dress is the cherry on top!"

Members who are dressed to support the group and are united under the same cause share similar experiences and can be assured that they are in a safe, social environment with peers who are likely to understand their situations (Kaiser, 1990). Go Red members recognize the red dress on their fellow heart disease survivors and automatically know that they have shared similar experiences. The assurance created by the shared red dress designates a sense of security, which in turn creates an automatic sense of oneness between women who may not even be previously acquainted. Pokornowski related: "Participating in Go Red events has been tremendously eye-opening and up-lifting. At my very first Go Red event, I was walking around and introducing myself to everyone and I started talking to this one woman who commented on my scar. She said that she had the same one and said that we're both

survivors. She then proceeded to give me the biggest hug ever! I felt as though I've known her for years and not only did she make me feel welcome, but she made me see that I am indeed a survivor and it's something to celebrate."

Love, strength, life, and survival: these are some of the common adjectives used by current members of Go Red for Women when asked what the red dress represents to them (Achord, Lawhead, Palleja, & Pokornowski, 2015). These members have likely never been introduced and live in separate states, yet they responded with similar and even matching terms to describe the dress that represents their shared cause. These members are not only in agreement with the symbolism of the red dress, but also with the purpose it represents. The common responses shared between these four members when asked the purpose of Go Red for Women were "to promote awareness, to provide support and to provide resources," in order to begin to end heart disease in women. Pokornowski in particular paraphrased the mission of Go Red quite eloquently by stating that the overall goal of the organization is "to create a platform which can be used to save lives."

Go Red for Women's members are united under the extremely worthy cause of raising awareness of heart disease in women. Their cause is strengthened and identified with the symbolism of the red dress. The organization recognizes that there is no one dress to suit the needs of all of its members and therefore encourages its members to signify their unity through use of color rather than style. Members are given the freedom to express their uniqueness and individuality through the design of their dresses while still identifying themselves as part of the group with the resilient red color. This freedom of dress creates equilibrium of conformity and originality that in turn satisfies the individuals needs to reach a sense of belonging, esteem and self-actualization, while simultaneously increasing their self-confidence when they need it most.

Go Red for Women is an organization that establishes a safe environment for heart disease survivors and experiencers. Women who have undergone similar situations are easily recognizable to

each other by sharing the red dress and its purpose. The meaning of love, strength, and support associated with the red dress by its members as well as the stories shared by heart disease survivors unites women across the country. The social bond created by the organization strengthens its members and raises awareness about the effects of heart disease in women. Go Red for Women and the red dress cooperatively illustrate how common dress can lead to positive effects in social situations and increase the esteem of united individuals.

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Hello 'Go Red for Women' Family:

My name is Grace Douglas and I am a senior apparel design student at Ball State University. I am currently in the process of completing my senior honors thesis and am seeking your help and support. The topic which I am pursuing is the effect of the symbolism found within a common garment worn by those unified toward the same cause. Along with this research I have prepared a creative project which includes designing and constructing a red dress to add to the Go Red for Women repertoire.

In order to better understand my topic, I am hoping to gain knowledge and opinions from you who have first-hand experience as an active Go Red for Women participant. Your input on the following questions will greatly assist in my research and guide me toward a stronger design to represent the foundation. All responses will remain anonymous and will be used solely for the purpose of this project.

- What does the red dress represent to you?
- What do you associate with the color red?
- Which styles of dresses do you feel most confident wearing? Which styles do you not feel confident wearing?
- How has your experience with heart disease changed since you joined the Go Red for Women family?
- Do you, or would you, ever wear a red dress to Go Red for Women events?
- What do you believe is the ultimate purpose of the Go Red for Women foundation?
- Is the red dress a suitable choice of garment for the purpose of the foundation and to the physical and emotional needs of the wearer?
 - If no, what garment would you suggest to be more appropriate?
- In your opinion, would the Go Red family be as strongly unified without the symbolic red dress?

Your honest and complete responses to these questions will be most appreciated. If you have any questions regarding the nature of this project, please feel free to contact me via email. I thank you for your time and wish to give you my utmost support in your cause and through your experiences both good and bad.

Sincerely,

Grace Douglas
Ball State University
gadouglas@bsu.edu

Amber, 41

Hi Grace!

Thank you for reaching out! I would be more than happy to answer the following questions for you.
What does the red dress represent to you? It represents Love, Strength, Survival

What do you associate with the color red? Love, Life

Which styles of dresses do you feel most confident wearing? One that goes up around the neck - covering my torso, and half way below my shoulders

Which styles do you not feel confident wearing? Strapless

How has your experience with heart disease changed since you joined the Go Red for Women family? I don't feel alone, I feel like I have friends that I can relate to with my condition- support

Do you, or would you, ever wear a red dress to Go Red for Women events? Absolutely

What do you believe is the ultimate purpose of the Go Red for Women foundation? To promote Awareness in Women and also to give them the reassurance they are not alone through this condition. That they are still human and can function as such, and create a support circle.

Is the red dress a suitable choice of garment for the purpose of the foundation and to the physical and emotional needs of the wearer? Yes, because I feel Red represents love and Life because without our "blood supply- being red" you have no life

In your opinion, would the Go Red family be as strongly unified without the symbolic red dress? Yes, don't think it is necessarily the "red" that unifies, I believe it is the "strength" and the support structure that symbolizes it.

I hope these answers can help you in your project! I am extremely happy to be a part of this ever changing world, and being a part of the Go Red for Women foundation has made me even more happy to be a part of it. We all have had different journeys to be where we are today, and I know I feel very blessed to still be a part of this life, and foundation. It is satisfying to me to know that I can help support someone else that is going through what I have already been through.

The Best of Luck!

Amber

Mila, 27

Hi Grace :)

First off, thank you for taking the time to read my story. I'd be happy to supply you with any information from my personal experience working with the heart association through Macys and now persuing to help through my jewelry and accessories business by designing exclusive items where a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the American heart association.

To start with, I'm not only actively involved in the go red for women's heart health. I also participate in collecting donations for breast cancer, diabetes, the aspca, etc. All of which have their own color and logo to represent their cause.

Its commonly known that unfortunately there is prejudice against people whether it be their race, sexual preferences or even what they wear, can subject them to segregation.

If you think about it, private schools have tried to delete that area of prejudice by requiring students to wear a uniform where everyone looks the same, focusing more on the common ground that they are all there to learn rather than to judge people on their wardrobe etc.

Its much like the ribbons, colors or even wearing red that creates a sense of unity that no matter what our race, sexual preference etc. by wearing a certain color or ribbon, we're all in it for the same purpose. Our reasons for joining the cause might be different such as a loved one that's been affected by the disease, a friend or even oneself, however its our end goals that unify and bring us together. To help fight the cause and possibly even find a cure. Something as simple as wearing a pin or color, can remind us of that.

As for the heart association's choice to dawn red for their cause, one might think back to the meaning behind colors. Red is universally known to represent love, passion, etc. All of which are emotions that stem from the heart. There's also the more literal reason of red being the color of choice to represent hearts.

Having worked with them previously when I was just 19, I remember their pin, the red dress, being more simple with a small heart on it. Now that heart has been removed but that same simple red dress still remains. One might think they chose a simple A line dress without any drastic fashion embellishments because that style could generally be worn by most women despite their body type. However I have noticed the dress to take on a more slender figure possibly to suggest ones weight can affect their heart and we as a nation have not only developed horrible eating habits over the years but have also become more aware and even possibly obsessed with our physical appearances.

I would hope the changes to their logo was to motivate people to make a change with their diet and waistline for the sake of their heart health and not to appease the societal pressure

Working with them for the first time at 19, despite not knowing of any heart disease affecting myself yet, I still struggled with other health problems which has always motivated me to help those that are suffering. Now many years later with an undiagnosed heart condition, the urge to help has naturally taken on a more personal reason, but that initial wanting to help others who are ill still serves as my drive to continue to help.

That is why I believe in what the heart association is trying to do. They are not only trying to find a cure/prevent heart disease, but also encouraging others to share their stories so that we as a community can not only unite to fight, but also become a support group for one another as we embark on a journey towards a healthier future. And if that means wearing red, a pin or whatever else is required, I would do so in a heart beat ;)

As for designing an actual red dress for your assignment, I would suggest maybe an empire waist with a flared out a line skirt that should be suitable for woman of many sizes. It's important when designing something such as this, that the sense of unity is not lost.

I hope this will help you with your thesis and you are more than welcome to quote me as I look forward to reading your paper if you wouldn't mind sharing once it's done :)

If you are interested in jewelry/accessories for donation purposes, feel free to contact me. I'm currently way behind in releasing my items due to health issues but one foot in front of the other and take it slow right?

I also have an exclusive necklace with a dress and a crystal heart that is unfortunately limited edition due to the pendant being discontinued. Hopefully that along with a few other items will generate a decent donation.

Good luck with your thesis :)

-Mila

Lillian, 60

Good evening Grace,

Thank you for choosing me!

I will answer each question in the same order as you asked.

1. The red dress to me represents strength, courage, and survival.
2. I associate the color red emotionally with love and physically with rich, oxygenated, life-giving blood.
3. At age 60 I feel most confident with a 3/4 length sleeve and a touching the knee, or half-way the knee, length hemline. I like figure flattering V-necks (I did not have open-heart, so no scar) and belted waist line.
4. I would not feel confident in a short, sleeveless, tight fitting dress.
5. I have only recently joined the Go Red for Women family so my experience with heart disease has not changed. I know that research has shown the "Cohort Effect" has positive outcomes. I am, however, looking forward to wearing my red dress to a Go Red for Women event this Friday, February 13th!
6. I believe the ultimate purpose of the Go Red for Women foundation is to greatly decrease the incidence of heart attacks and strokes by raising awareness about risk factors and prevention methods. Also to raise money for more research into better early screening for women. Women need to be taken seriously when we complain of vague symptoms like extreme fatigue. Also offered cardiac rehab after a heart attack. I was not! My three brothers were! That spoke volumes about the difference in care!
7. I think the red dress is a suitable choice of garment for the foundation and my physical and emotional needs because a dress differentiates me as feminine, as a woman, as a mother, as a nurse to be respected and honored in all those roles. A women's symptoms are different from a man's.
8. I do not think that the Go Red family would be as strongly unified without the symbolic red dress. It is a very strong statement to the world that it is women's cardiovascular disease that is the focus. I think all women love clothes so it is the perfect way to unify women!

Best of luck with apparel design. Always take care of your heart first! May our paths cross one day.

Lillian

Victoria, 25

What does the red dress represent to me:

- Strength
- Support
- Dedication
- Education

What do you associate with the color red:

- Power
- Strength
- Femininity
- Attention-grabbing

Which style of dresses do you feel most comfortable in?

- I am most comfortable in dresses that show off my figure without showing too much of my body. I am somewhat conservative and believe that you don't have to show a lot in order to look gorgeous. I always like to leave a little to the imagination and enjoy when dresses have subtle details. Like a lace outline at the very bottom or a modest cut-out on the back.

Which styles do you not feel comfortable in wearing?

- I don't feel comfortable in dresses that are too short, too tight, too revealing in the anywhere. I tend to stay away from too much sparkle and gravitate to more timeless and classic looks.

How has your experience with heart disease changed since you joined the Go Red for Women family?

- I have learned so much more about heart disease through AHA and Go Red. The resources that AHA provides to the public are incredible and easy to understand and I know that I can rely on that information to be accurate and thorough. It has also opened my eyes to the level in which cardiovascular disease affects women. It's one thing to read about it and an entirely different thing to meet the women who have been affected.
- Participating in Go Red events has been tremendously eye-opening and up-lifting. At my very first Go Red event, I was walking around and introducing myself to everyone and I started talking to this one woman who commented on my scar. She said that she had the same one and said that we're both survivors. She then proceeded to give me the biggest hug ever! I felt as though I've known her for years and not only did she make me feel welcome, but she made me see that I am indeed a survivor and it's something to celebrate.

Do you, or would you, ever wear a red dress to a Go Red for Women event?

- I cannot wait to wear red at the next Go Red event! I have already started shopping for my outfit for the luncheon taking place at the end of February. And, quite honestly, the number of red items in my closet has increased since my involvement began. Red is becoming a favorite color of mine not only because it's gorgeous, but because of what it stands for.

What do you believe is the ultimate purpose of the Go Red for Women foundation?

- I believe that the ultimate purpose of the Go Red for Women foundation is to create a platform which can be used to save lives. It's about starting difficult conversations with not only medical professionals, but also with lawmakers and education professionals so that the conversations can be brought full

circle. To me, Go Red wants to create a safe space where people feel comfortable and are encouraged to share their research, stories, and questions with the mutual goal of saving lives.

Is the red dress a suitable choice of garment for the purpose of the foundation and to the physical and emotional needs of the wearer?

- I absolutely love the red dress icon. Because it's a dress it states that the focus is on women. The color is fierce and eye-catching. That simple red dress symbolizes an entire movement that contains an unbelievable level of support, determination, responsibility, accountability, hope, and love. I see that red dress pin every morning as I put my jacket on and I smile to myself because not only does that red dress symbolize my journey thus far, but it also symbolizes the journey of so many other women and the power to help save more lives.

If no, what garment would you suggest to be more appropriate?

In your opinion, would the Go Red family be strongly unified without the symbolic red dress?

- Yes, because I believe the mission of AHA and Go Red is what unifies everyone and the red dress is the cherry on top!

Dr. Saiki and Grace,

I am the Indianapolis Go Red For Women Corporate Events Director and am responding to your request for support of Grace's research project. What a creative and outstanding way to raise awareness about women and heart disease! Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States, yet most women do not have it on their radar screen as a threat to their wellness. One in three women are lost to heart disease, yet most women don't know the signs and symptoms, or are aware of how to reduce their risk. This is why 11 years ago the American Heart Association launched Go Red For Women, to educate women about heart disease. The AHA is striving to use the red dress symbol and color as a trigger for people to think about heart disease in women, similar to the pink ribbon for breast cancer. Most people see pink in October and think about supporting Komen, but unfortunately the red dress and red is not quite there yet.

Grace's project and the display of this dress with some sort of signage would be a creative way to help the AHA raise awareness about our mission. We are happy to sign off on the project and endorse her student effort to spread the word. Should you need survivors to model the dress or be interviewed let me know. Through my position I meet many women who have survived a heart attack and want to help. Please let me know what is needed for your project. We can't be involved in promoting the sale of the dress due to our relationship with Macy's and as the dress is a trademarked logo that the AHA does not own, we can't use any alteration of the dress for our materials, but we can certainly applaud this student project! Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me directly on my cell.

Warm Regards,

Julie Petr
Corporate Events Director
American Heart Association
Midwest Affiliate
6500 Technology Drive, Suite 100
Indianapolis, IN 46278
julie.petr@heart.org
317-709-5736 cell

my family is why